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RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001334

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: HARD-LINE TURKISH HISTORIAN OUSTED

REF: ANKARA 792

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) In a surprise move, reported by the press as a good will gesture toward Armenia, quasi-governmental Turkish Historical Society (TTK) President Yusuf Halacoglu was relieved from his duties by a Cabinet decision published in the July 23 Official Gazette. Halacoglu, during his 15-year tenure as president of the prestigious, Ataturk-founded institution, aggressively sought to refute Armenian genocide claims and courted controversy through sometimes outlandish assertions, such as Turkey's Alevi Kurds were all Armenians. Halacoglu was reportedly informed of the decision while on holiday; he has stated he will not seek legal redress against the decision and will return to Gazi University in Ankara as a professor. FM Babacan, on July 24, said no link should be drawn between Turkey-Armenia relations and Halacoglu's dismissal. State Minister Aydin denied Halacoglu was sacked, maintaining instead that his services were appreciated, but that the TTK was in need of renewal and his contract would not be renewed.

¶2. (C) COMMENT: While Halacoglu did not oppose Turkish dialogue with Armenia, as the GOT's de facto historian, his staunch and unequivocal denials of Armenian genocide allegations compromised the credibility of Turkey's joint historical commissions offer (see reftel); it would have been almost impossible for Turkey to engage on such a commission without Halacoglu's direct participation. His replacement, Ali Birinci, a former Police Academy professor and reportedly an internationalist and more liberal thinker, may signal the Turks are prepared to engage in a joint historical analysis with a more open mind. END COMMENT.

¶3. (U) BIOGRAPHY OF PROF. DR. ALI BIRINCI (unofficial translation)

BEGIN TEXT.

Born in Balikli Seyh village of Hendek, Sakarya province on August 25, 1947; parents were farmers.

Graduated in 1973 from the Economics and Finance Department of the Ankara University Political Sciences Faculty.

Served in the Turkish National Police 1973-1976.

Taught at Sivas' Cumhuriyet University History Department from 1976 to 1988; Ph.D 1986.

Began lecturing at the Police Academy in 1988 on Turkish

political history and reforms; full professor in 2000.

Researched in Paris 1989-1990.

Lectured at Turkish-Kyrgyz Manas University, 2002-2004;
studied Russian and Kyrgyz.

Numerous publications, including poetry books.

END TEXT.

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WILSON